

REMARKS

The examiner has rejected the two independent claims (1, 23) under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Grabelsky (US 6169744). The claims have been amended to better clarify the invention. Particularly in light of the amendments, the examiner is urged to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

The invention provides a technique for restricting the stations permitted to contend for access during a contention period. As called for by the claims, a first station "detect[s] contention control information from information transmitted by another station in a prior frame", and then "determine[s] from the contention control information if [it] is permitted to contend for access during a contention period." It is important to distinguish between providing a contention period during which stations contend for access -- a very common step in contention-based networks (e.g., CSMA networks), and something that the invention shares with Grabelsky and many other prior art references -- and the very different step of determining if a station is permitted to contend for access during the contention period. Grabelsky does not disclose or suggest the latter.

The examiner's references to portions of Grabelsky (e.g., columns 5 and 6) merely describe what happens during a contention period, and suggests nothing about restricting which stations are permitted to contend during that period. In Grabelsky, any station wishing to contend transmit a tone at a frequency indicative of the priority of the frame it wishes to transmit, and only the stations with the highest priority are permitted to transmit.

By contrast, in the invention, stations determine from contention control information transmitted in a prior frame whether they are permitted to contend during a contention period. Those that are permitted, engage in contention during the contention period, and the winner is then allowed to transmit. That initial step of a station determining whether it is permitted to contend during a contention period is not disclosed or suggested by Grabelsky.

A further distinction over Grabelsky is that the contention control information used to make that determination is transmitted in a prior frame. The step taught in Grabelsky of transmitting different frequency tones to specify a priority all occurs in a contention period

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associated with the frame in which data is to be sent. There is no suggestion that a station receives contention control information in a prior frame.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 23 are in condition for allowance.

The remaining claims are all properly dependent on one or more of the independent claims, and thus allowable therewith. Each of the dependent claims adds one or more further limitations that enhance patentability, but those limitations are not presently relied upon. For that reason, and not because applicants agree with the examiner, no rebuttal is offered to the examiner's reasons for rejecting the dependent claims.

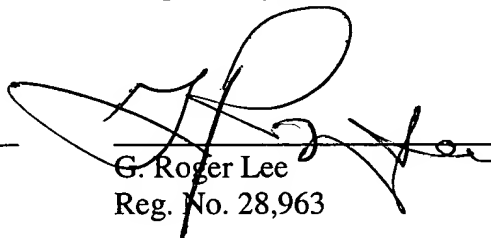
Allowance of the application is requested.

Enclosed is a \$950 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

9/27/04



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